An Inferentialist Account of Fictional Names

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Abstract: The goal of this paper is to present and defend an inferentialist account of the meaning of fictional names on the basis of Sellars-Brandom's inferentialist semantics and a Brandomian anaphoric theory of reference. On this inferentialist account, the meaning of a fictional name is constituted by the relevant language norms which provide the correctness conditions for its use. In addition, the Brandomian anaphoric theory of reference allows us to understand reference in terms of anaphoric word-word relations, rather than substantial word-world relations. In this paper I argue that this inferentialist account has many important merits over its rival theories. One important merit is that it explains why we can use fictional names to make true statements, even if they lack bearers. As a consequence, this theory allows us to use fictional names without committing ourselves to an implausible ontology of fictional entities. Another important merit is that it provides a uniform semantic account of fictional names across different types of statements in which fictional names are involved.

Keywords: Fictional names; inferentialist semantics; the anaphoric theory of reference; Sellars; Brandom.

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1. Introductory remarks

Overall, there are two approaches to the semantics of natural language. One is the *truth-conditional* approach to meaning, and the other is the *inferentialist* approach to meaning. On the former approach, the meaning of an expression is to be explained in terms of its *truth conditions*. On the latter approach, the meaning of an expression is to be explained in terms of its *inferential use.*

My goal in this paper is to present and defend a new semantic account of fictional names along the latter approach. In particular, my account of fictional names is based on Sellars-Brandom's inferentialist semantics and a Brandomian anaphoric theory of reference. On this account, the meaning of a fictional name is constituted by the relevant language norms which determine its correct use; and reference is to be explained in terms of anaphoric word-word relations, rather than substantial word-world relations. In this paper I argue that this account has many important merits over its rival theories, especially because it satisfies the following four desiderata:

- First, it is desirable to regard fictional names as genuine names rather than disguised descriptions.
- Second, it is desirable to regard fictional names as meaningful.
- Third, it is desirable to avoid attributing a bearer to a fictional name.
- Fourth, it is desirable to provide a uniform semantic account of fictional names across different types of statements in which fictional names are involved.

Thus, one important merit of this account is that it explains why we can use fictional names to make true statements, even if they lack bearers. As a consequence, this account allows us to use fictional names without committing ourselves to an implausible ontology of fictional entities. Another important merit is that it provides a uniform semantic account of fictional names across different types of statements related to fictional names.

This paper proceeds as follows. In section 2, I explain the main motivations for the aforementioned four desiderata. In section 3, I briefly explain Sellars-Brandom's inferentialist semantics and Brandom's anaphoric approach to reference. In section 4, I explain how fictional and non-fictional

names are different in their language norms. Finally, in section 5, I discuss the merits of my inferentialist account.

2. Four desiderata

In this section, let me explain the main motivations for the aforementioned four desiderata for a semantic theory of fictional names.

To begin with, consider the following two sentences:

Bertrand Russell smokes.
Sherlock Holmes smokes.

These two sentences share the same form 'x smokes', where 'x' is a place holder for a name. As Adams et al (1997, 131) point out, fictional names such as 'Sherlock Holmes' play the role of a name syntactically, and also in inferences. For example, from the premise that Sherlock Holmes is not married, we can infer that he has no wife. Moreover, when one reads a sentence like 'Sherlock Holmes is a detective', it is natural to imagine that the property of being a detective is attributed to someone. One important alternative is the descriptivist view of names, which holds that ordinary proper names are semantically equivalent to definite descriptions. Notably, Currie (1990) argues for a descriptivist theory of fictional names, according to which the meaning of a fictional name can be understood in terms of the entire set of descriptions associated with the name. But such a descriptivist theory is vulnerable to well-known problems pointed out by Kripke (1980).

One important problem arises from Currie's claim that the meaning of a fictional name is equivalent to the entire set of descriptions associated with the name. What should be noted in this regard is that one can successfully use a fictional name, even if one knows very little about those descriptions. For example, one can assert that Sherlock Holmes is a detective, even if one knows very little about this fictional character. For these reasons, fictional names should be regarded as genuine names, if possible. This is my first desideratum.

Let us move on to the second desideratum. The most influential semantic view of proper names today is referentialism, according to which the

semantic contribution of a name is its referent.[1] A strong version of referentialism is Millianism, the view that the semantic content of a name is exhausted by its referent. But this view faces a serious challenge with regard to fictional names. For fictional names such as 'Sherlock Holmes' seem to lack bearers, and hence this view seems to imply that they are devoid of semantic content. One option that referentialists can take is to bite the bullet by admitting that fictional names are not meaningful. Notably, according to Walton's make-believe theory (1990), when we are engaging with a fictional story, we are just pretending that fictional names are meaningful.

But we have no real difficulty in understanding sentences containing fictional names, such as 'Sherlock Holmes is a detective'. If this is the case, fictional names contained in such sentences are better understood as being meaningful. In addition, as Salmon (2005, 76) points out, pretend use is not real use, and so by merely pretending that a name like 'Sherlock Holmes' has a particular use, no real use is attached to the name. In other words, a pretend use of a name does not generate a real name. What is noteworthy in this regard is that we are free to pretend whatever we like. But it is not correct to say, for example, that Sherlock Holmes is a ballet dancer. This indicates that 'Sherlock Holmes' as a real name has the correctness conditions for its use. But if 'Sherlock Holmes' were not meaningful, we could hardly say that this name has the correctness conditions for its use. Therefore, *pace* the pretense view, it is desirable to retain the natural opinion that fictional names are meaningful. This is my second desideratum.

Another option for referentialists is to hold that fictional names have bearers. But this option requires them to accept the realist view which states that our reality includes fictional objects as bearers of fictional names. Two popular realist approaches are Meinongianism (e.g., Parsons 1980; Routley 1980; Zalta 1983, 1988) and Artifactualism (e.g., Salmon 2005). By appealing to a metaphysical distinction between 'there is' and 'exists', Meinongians hold that there are such things as fictional objects, but those things are non-existent objects. By contrast, according to Artifactualism, fictional objects are abstract artifacts which are created by human practices,

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[1]   This view is associated with philosophers such as Kripke (1980), Donnellan (1974), and Kaplan (1979).

and those abstract entities actually exist, because artifactualists do not accept the distinction between 'there is' and 'exists'.

By contrast, the anti-realist view denies that our reality contains such fictional objects. It seems that there are empty names, which lack bearers. For example, consider names from myths and mistaken scientific theories such as 'Zeus', Pegasus', and 'Vulcan'. It also seems that we can make true negative existential statements such as 'Vulcan does not exist.' And to say that Vulcan does not exist seems tantamount to saying that 'Vulcan' has no bearer. If, as these examples suggest, there are indeed empty but meaningful names, then fictional names like 'Sherlock Holmes' can also be meaningful, even if they lack bearers. Besides, the alleged fictional objects, whether they are non-existent or abstract, are at least metaphysically controversial objects. Moreover, semantics should not meddle with our naturalistic world-view, if possible. For these reasons, it would be worth exploring the view that fictional names can be meaningful, even if they lack bearers. This is my third desideratum.[2]

Finally, my fourth desideratum is that it is desirable to provide a uniform semantic account of fictional names across different types of statements in which fictional names are involved. To illustrate, consider the following three kinds of statements.

(1)   Sherlock Holmes is a detective.
(2)   According to The Hound of the Baskervilles, Sherlock Holmes is a detective.
(3)   Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character created by Conan Doyle.

We can distinguish between discourse that is *internal* to a fiction and discourse that is *external* to the fiction. In internal discourse, a fictional statement like (1) is to be understood from the perspective within fiction. By contrast, in external discourse, a metafictional statement like (3) is to be understood from the perspective of the real world, outside fiction. To put

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[2]   Here I do not mean to suggest that there is no such account yet. One notable example is Sainsbury's Fregean view (2005; 2010). This view allows us to understand fictional names as empty but meaningful. But he takes a truth-conditional approach to meaning. By contrast, as noted, the goal of this paper is to offer an alternative account along the inferentialist approach to meaning.

the point another way, the name 'Sherlock Holmes' in (1) is used *fictionally*, that is, in internal discourse. By contrast, the name 'Sherlock Holmes' in (3) is used *metafictionally*, that is, in external discourse. Note that Sherlock Holmes is understood as a flesh and blood individual in internal discourse, whereas Sherlock Holmes is understood as a fictional character in external discourse.[3]

But according to Recanati (2018), there is the third type of use for fictional names: *parafictional uses*. On his view, there is no such person as Sherlock Holmes in the world, and so 'Sherlock Holmes' in (1) is an empty name. As a consequence, when a fictional name is used fictionally, it is not genuinely referential. By contrast, according to Recanati, when a fictional name, as used in (3), is used metafictionally, it refers to a cultural artifact. Thus, metafictional uses of a fictional name are genuinely referential. The question then is how to understand statements like (2), i.e., statements about what is true in some fiction but which are not part of the original storytelling. On Recanati's view, like metafictional statements, parafictional statements such as (2) are true or false; and they are to be evaluated from the perspective outside fiction. On the other hand, like fictional statements, the properties which parafictional statements ascribe to the putative referent of a fictional name are the kind of properties which fictional statements ascribe, that is, properties such as *being a detective* and *playing the violin*. Note that these are properties suitable for flesh and blood individuals, not for abstract objects. Along these lines, Recanati argues that parafictional statements share features with both fictional and metafictional statements.

 At this point, an important question arises: Is there a uniform semantic analysis of fictional, parafictional, and metafictional statements? What is noteworthy in this regard is that we seem to run into trouble when we try to provide a uniform semantic account of fictional names used in these different types of statements. Let me illustrate this point. Suppose that a realist approach is true, so that a fictional name like 'Sherlock Holmes' refers to an abstract object across these different types of statements. Then we face a problem in understanding fictional statements like (1), because properties like *being a detective* are not suitable for abstract objects. On the

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[3]   For a more detailed discussion of the internal/external distinction, see Semeijn & Zalta (2021, 172–75).

other hand, suppose that a fictional name like 'Sherlock Holmes' refers to a flesh and blood individual, so that properties like *being a detective* can be attributed to Sherlock Holmes. But then we run into a problem in understanding metafictional statements like (3), because flesh and blood individuals are not the kind of things that can be created by a novelist. Certainly, it is desirable to avoid this kind of problem.[4] This is my fourth and last desideratum.

Two cautionary remarks might be in order here. The first is concerned with the above-discussed desiderata. In this paper, I will not provide any further defense for them. This is not because it needs no more defense, but rather because a proper defense of these desiderata would take me too far from the main goal of this paper, which is to present an inferentialist account of fictional names, rather than criticizing its rival theories. Besides, I think these desiderata are reasonable, so that it is worthwhile to explore an account which satisfy all of them.

The second cautionary remark is also related to the goal of this paper. My inferentialist account of fictional names is deeply indebted to Brandom's works. Unfortunately, however, he has not provided a separate account of fictional names. But on my view fictional names such as 'Sherlock Holmes' lack bearers. And whether or not a name has a bearer affects its meaning. As a consequence, whether an expression is used as a fictional name or as non-fictional name makes a significant difference to its meaning. This is why we need a separate account of fictional names. In addition, I will also mention some additional differences between Brandom's own account and my account in due course.[5]

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[4]   Due to this kind of problem, Semeijn & Zalta (2021) argue that a uniform semantic treatment of fictional names is required across fictional, parafictional and metafictional discourse. They also argue that their object theory can provide such a uniform semantic treatment. But their object theory does not meet my third desideratum, namely that it is desirable to avoid attributing a bearer to a fictional name.

[5]   See especially footnotes 12 and 17.

3. Sellars-Brandom's inferentialist semantics and Brandom's anaphoric approach to reference

My inferentialist account of fictional names is based not only on Sellars-Brandom's inferentialist semantics, but also on Brandom's anaphoric theory of reference, although my account differs from their views in some respects. Thus, let me briefly explain these theories in this section.

According to Sellars-Brandom's inferentialist semantics, we can understand the meaning of a linguistic expression in terms of language norms (or rules) that bind those who use the expression. In particular, according to Sellars (1963, 327-331), there are three kinds of language norms. The first is language-entry norms. The circumstances in which an expression is correctly applied are an essential aspect to the meaning of the expression, and such circumstances can be non-linguistic. And language-entry norms prescribe linguistic moves in response to such non-linguistic circumstances. For example, in the presence of a visibly red thing, one is allowed to assert 'This is red', and one is prohibited to assert 'This is blue'. The second is language-language norms. These norms are concerned with the appropriate consequences of application of an expression. Thus these norms prescribe linguistic moves in response to linguistic episodes. For example, under the circumstances in which one can assert 'This is red', one is allowed to infer 'This is colored', but one is prohibited to infer 'This is blue'. The third is language-exit norms. These norms prescribe non-linguistic moves in response to linguistic episodes. For example, under normal circumstances and barring a change of mind, a person should pick up a red apple after he says, 'I'll pick up a red apple'. On Sellars's view, it is these three kinds of language norms for an expression that are constitutive of the meaning of the expression. As I will argue in the next section, we can understand the meaning of fictional names in a similar way.

Let us now turn to Brandom's anaphoric theory of reference. To begin with, it is important to note the distinction between a bottom-up approach and a top-down approach. Consider the following simple sentence: 'Lassie is a dog.' This sentence consists of two components. One is the name 'Lassie', and the other is the predicate 'is a dog'. On a bottom-up approach, we first need to explain the meanings of such sub-sentential expressions and

then, on the basis of these meanings, we should explain the meanings of sentences constructed by such sub-sentential expressions, and finally proprieties of inferences in which those sentences are involved. Accordingly, on this bottom-up approach, the meaning of a name should be intelligible independently of the meaning of a sentence in which it occurs. Contemporary representational approaches to semantics typically adopt this approach. One notable example is Tarskian model-theoretic semantics.[6] But Sellars-Brandom's inferentialist denies this kind of bottom-up approach. As mentioned before, this semantics explains the meaning of an expression in terms of its *inferential use*. What should be noted in this regard is this: It is *sentences* that can play the basic inferential roles of premises and conclusion in inferences. Accordingly, the meanings of sub-sentential expressions such as singular terms and predicates have to be projected from the inferential roles of sentences. Therefore, according to the inferentialist semantics, the meanings of sub-sentential expressions are not prior to the meanings of sentences in which those sub-sentential expressions occur. To put the point another way, the inferentialist semantics adopts a top-down approach. This top-down approach starts by explaining the inferential relations between sentential claims, and then explains the meanings of sub-sentential expressions in terms of their potential contribution to those inferential relations.

With this difference in mind, consider the following statement:

(4)   'China' refers to China.

On the traditional, non-deflationary approach to reference, 'refers' in (4) expresses a substantial relation between a name and its referent as an extra-linguistic entity, and so (4) is true because the name 'China' stands in a *substantial referential relation* to a certain extra-linguistic entity, namely the world's third largest country (by land area). Let me briefly explain why this view is problematic.

The first thing to note is that it is certainly possible for someone to use an expression type 'China' as a name of something other than the country, for example, as the name of his pet dog. Thus, if a person successfully uses an expression token 'China' as the name of the country, then this is not because the expression type 'China' stands in a referential relation to the

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6   For example, see Montague (1974) and Tarski (1983).

country, but because s/he *uses* the expression token 'China' in a certain way. If so, how can we distinguish between cases in which it is used as the name of the country and cases in which it is used as the name of a particular pet dog. One plausible answer is this: A person uses 'China' as the name of the country, if s/he uses it in accordance with a language norm such as that one may (or ought to) apply the name only to the particular country. If one instead uses 'China' in accordance with a different language norm such as that one may apply the name only to a certain pet dog, then it is used as the name of a pet dog. If this is correct, we cannot determine what is referred to by such an expression independently of the relevant language norms. But as noted before, on the bottom-up approach, the meaning of a name should be intelligible independently of the meaning of a sentence in which it occurs. In particular, according to the direct reference theory of names, names are *directly referential*. For example, the name 'Lassie' means Lassie because the former directly refers to the latter. What is meant here by 'directly referential' is that the name contributes nothing but its referent to the meaning of a sentence in which it occurs, and the referential relation between the name and its referent has priority over the meaning of the whole sentence, so that the meaning of 'Lassie' can be understood independently of the meaning of the whole sentence.[7]

At this point, it is important to recognize that the correctness conditions for the use of a name can hardly be established independently of any sentence in which it occurs. Let me explain. Suppose that Jones has a pet dog called 'Lassie'. Under what conditions can we say that the one referred to as 'Lassie' is indeed Jones's pet dog? As pointed out before, we cannot determine what is referred to by such a name independently of the relevant language norms, such as that one may apply the name only to Jones's pet dog. How then can this kind of language norm be established? First, Jones's pet dog must be given this name 'Lassie'. And this naming process typically involves using sentences such as 'Let us call my pet dog Lassie'. Without using such a sentence, we can hardly conduct this kind of naming ceremony. Second, this kind of language norm must be maintained socially by virtue of positive and negative social sanctions. For example, if someone misuses

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[7]   Millians such as Donnellan (1974), Kaplan (1975), and Salmon (1986; 2005) uphold this view.

this name to talk about something other than Jones's pet dog, this misuse should be corrected by using sentences such as 'That thing is not Lassie' or 'Lassie is the name of Jones's pet dog'. If these considerations are correct, there are no such things as *directly referential* relations between our language and the world.

Of course, this does not mean that there are no relationships between tokens of 'China' and the world's third largest country. Admittedly, there might be some correlations between those tokens of 'China' and the world's third largest country. Nonetheless, those correlations would be very complex. More importantly, there is no good reason to pick out any of those correlations as *the* desired word-world referential relation. In this regard, it is important to note that meaning is *normative.* For example, it is our language norm that we may apply the name 'China' only to a particular country. Given this language norm, you are *allowed* to use 'China' to talk about the particular country, and you can be *subject to criticism* for making a linguistic error, if you use it to talk about another country such as Japan. In this sense, the use of an expression has a normative implication. But any factual correlation by itself does not have this kind of normative implication.

Along the above lines, Brandom argues that it is very difficult to explain what the aforementioned word-world relation really is, and so we had better pursue an alternative approach to reference. On his anaphoric theory, reference is not a substantial concept. For example, the quoted name 'China' in (4) is *mentioned* and the name appearing after the expression 'refers' is *used*; and 'refers' here does not express a substantial relation between a linguistic expression and an extra-linguistic entity. Instead, 'refers' here expresses an *anaphoric word-word relation* between the mentioned name and the used name. What then is an anaphoric word-word relation? Consider the following statement:

If *Mary* wants to leave on time, *she* should leave now.

In this conditional statement, 'she' is a pronoun that is used instead of the proper name 'Mary' in the antecedent. Consequently, the token of 'she' bears an anaphoric word-word relation with the token of 'Mary'. And such an anaphoric relation is a *commitment-preserving* link in the following sense: If anyone treats two word tokens as anaphorically related, then s/he

is thereby committed to treating both as having the same inferential significance. Brandom argues that we should understand the notion of reference in the same way. Suppose that someone named 'Joe' makes the following statement to another person with the name 'Jim':

> I should have known better than to let the mechanic Binkley work on my car. That airhead misadjusted the valves.

Suppose also that Jim forgot the name 'Binkley', but he nonetheless remembers that Joe called the mechanic as 'that airhead'. Then he may say:

> For car repair, don't go to the mechanic Joe referred to as 'that airhead'.

According to Brandom (1994, 305; 2005b, 265–66), in this discourse, the description 'the mechanic Joe referred to as "that airhead"' is a lexically complex pronoun that takes the token of 'that airhead' originally used by Joe as its anaphoric antecedent. Brandom calls such a description 'an anaphorically indirect definite description'. If the antecedent and dependent tokens are sufficiently close to each other in time, space, or audience attention, one may use lexically simple pronouns such as 'he', 'she' or 'it'. As for distant antecedents, however, one might be required to use such indirect definite descriptions, which give us more information about their antecedents. On Brandom's view, we can understand the expression 'refers' as a pronoun-forming operator that is used to form such an anaphorically indirect definite description. Accordingly, in the above case, the token of 'the mechanic Joe referred to as "that airhead"' bears an anaphoric word-word relation with the token of 'that airhead', and such an anaphoric relation is a commitment-preserving link; that is, since Jim uses the former instead of the latter, if Jim is committed to holding that the one Joe referred to as 'that airhead' is F, then he should also be committed to holding that the one he referred to as 'the mechanic Joe referred to as "that airhead"' is F. On the anaphoric theory of reference, therefore, we can understand the expression 'refers', not in terms of a substantial relation between a linguistic expression and an extra-linguistic entity, but rather in terms of an anaphoric word-word relation.[8]

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[8]   The anaphoric theory of reference is a deflationary theory of reference, rather than a semantic theory of names. And there are many reasons for the inferentialist

At this point, it would be worthwhile to compare the anaphoric theory with the causal-historical theory of reference. To begin, direct referentialists sharply distinguish the semantics of names from what Lycan (2008, 52) calls 'a philosophical theory of referring'. The semantics of names explains what names contribute to the meanings of sentences in which they occur; for such a semantic account, Kripke (1980) proposes a Millian theory of names, according to which the sole semantic contribution of a name is its bearer. By contrast, a philosophical theory of referring addresses the question of how one's utterance of a name is tied to the object that gets referred to by that utterance; for this account, Kripke proposes the causal-historical theory of reference. On this theory, roughly, a speaker, using a name on a particular occasion, refers to an object if there is a causal-historical chain of reference-preserving link leading from the speaker's use of the name on that occasion ultimately to the event of the object's being given that name. What should be noted about the causal-historical theory of reference in conjunction with the Millian theory of names is that a causal-historical chain of tokens of a name is nothing more than a *reference-preserving* link. The reason is clear. On the Millian theory, the semantic content of a name is exhausted by its referent, and hence it is not legitimate to appeal to anything other than its referent in explaining what the name contributes to the meaning of a sentence in which it occurs. In addition, on this non-deflationary theory of reference, if a dependent token of a name like 'Joe Biden' inherits a referent from an antecedent token, this is because the dependent token is anaphorically related to some antecedent token which stands in a substantial referential relation to a certain extra-linguistic entity, namely Joe Biden himself.

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to take a deflationary approach to reference. The most important reason is this: On Sellars-Brandom's inferentialist semantics, the meaning of an expression should be explained in terms of a substantial notion of inference, rather than in terms of alleged substantial truth-theoretic notions. In other words, this semantics denies that truth conditions should play the fundamental role in semantics that the truth-conditional semantics give to them. As a consequence, on this semantics, its basic notion is correct inference, rather than truth-theoretic notions such as truth and reference. If, however, the notion of reference is substantial to the effect that inference depends on reference, we can hardly understand the notion of inference independently of the notion of reference.

As Brandom (2005a, 248) points out, the considerations that motivate the causal-historical theory can be understood equally as motiving the anaphoric theory. But there are still important differences between these two theories of reference. First, on the anaphoric approach, an anaphoric relation is a *commitment-preserving* link, rather than a reference-preserving link, so that if anyone treats two word tokens as anaphorically related, then s/he is thereby committed to treating both as having the same inferential significance. Second, on the anaphoric theory, the sameness of reference is achieved by an anaphoric relation, but reference here should be understood as a deflationary notion. That is, we should understand the expression 'refers', not in terms of a substantial relation between a linguistic expression and an extra-linguistic entity, but rather in terms of an anaphoric word-word relation.

Here again, a cautionary note might be necessary. It is beyond the scope of this paper to fully defend the anaphoric theory of reference. See Brandom (1994; 2005b) for a detailed defense of this theory. My goal is instead to defend an inferentialist account of fictional names by assuming that it is a viable theory of reference. And based on the anaphoric theory, as we will see, we can explain the meaningfulness of fictional names, even if these names lack bearers.

4. The differences between fictional and non-fictional names in language norms

As mentioned in the previous section, on Sellars-Brandom's inferentialist semantics, the meaning of an expression is constituted by the relevant language norms which determine its correct use. In this section, I argue that the meaning of fictional names can be understood in a similar way. For example, I argue that the meaning of 'Sherlock Holmes' is constituted by the relevant language norms which determine its correct use. In addition, I argue that the main differences in meaning between fictional and non-fictional names arise from the fact that the uses of these names are governed by different language norms.

Let us start by considering the following question: How can we distinguish works of fiction from works of non-fiction? According to Walton (1990), non-fiction invites belief, whereas fiction invites imagining without belief, and so works of fiction are distinguished from works of non-fiction in that the former essentially involve a proposal or invitation to imagine. Besides Walton, several writers such as Currie (1990), Lamarque & Olsen (1994), Davies (2007), Stock (2011), and García-Carpintero (2013) have defended various versions of the prescriptions to imagine account of fiction. Among these versions, I agree with García-Carpintero's version on which the norms of fiction are constitutive of fictional discourse. On this normative version, if one engages with a fictional story, one is thereby prescribed to imagine as the story says, and such a prescription has normative force for the audience; in other words, the audience is subject to the following norm: 'Imagine that p if, according to the story, p.' For example, when one engages with a Holmes story such as *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, one is prescribed to imagine that Sherlock Holmes is a detective. And refusing to imagine in this way is tantamount to refusing to participate in a human practice of consuming such a story as a work of fiction.[9]

What is important to note here is that the prescriptions to imagine account of fiction is an account for the distinction between fictional and non-fictional works, but not an account for the meaning of fictional names. For example, Walton subscribes to the direct reference theory of names. Thus, on his view, fictional names are devoid of semantic content, because they lack bearers. And this is why, as mentioned in section 2, he advocates a pretense view, according to which when we are engaging with a fictional story, we are just pretending that fictional names are meaningful. Likewise, García-Carpintero's normative account of fiction-making is an account for the distinction between fiction and non-fiction. On this account, the norms

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[9]   This does not mean that we have an absolute obligation to imagine whatever is said in a work of fiction. As García-Carpintero (2013, 346) points out, such prescriptions can be understood as weak directives such as proposals or invitations to imagine. Thus, when one is invited to imagine as a fictional story says, one can refuse the invitation. Nonetheless, insofar as one engages with a fictional story by (implicitly) accepting this invitation, one is thereby prescribed to imagine as the story says.

of fiction are constitutive of fictional discourse, but those norms have no direct bearing on the meaning of fictional names. Therefore, the prescriptions to imagine account of fiction does not force us to accept a particular meaning theory of fictional names. My proposal is to combine a version of this account with the inferentialist semantics.

To begin, my inferentialist account of fictional names adopts a Brandomian anaphoric theory of reference. As discussed in the previous section, we can understand the expression 'refers', not in terms of a substantial relation between a linguistic expression and an extra-linguistic entity, but rather in terms of an anaphoric word-word relation. And an anaphoric chain of tokens of a name is a *commitment-preserving* link, so that if anyone treats two tokens of a name as anaphorically related, then s/he is thereby committed to treating both as having the same inferential significance. The same points apply to fictional names. But one important difference is this: Even if a fictional name lacks a bearer, a token of the name can initiate an anaphoric chain, which can be continued by other tokens of the same name or tokens of a pronoun. For example, one can make up a story in the following way:

> Sherlock Holmes is a detective. He lives with Dr. Watson in Baker Street. He is interested in Early English Chapters, and so on.

Here a token of the name 'Sherlock Holmes' initiates an anaphoric chain that is continued by tokens of the pronoun 'he'. It is (partly) by virtue of such an anaphoric chain that the correctness conditions for the use of 'Sherlock Holmes' are established. And it is also by virtue of such an anaphoric chain that different tokens of a fictional name are all about the same fictional character.

In addition, on my inferentialist account, we can also understand the meaning of a fictional name in terms of the relevant language norms which determine its correct use. But there are still important differences between fictional and non-fictional names in their language norms. The most important difference is that, in the case of a fictional name such as 'Sherlock Holmes', the correctness conditions for its use depend on a work of fiction in which it occurs, whereas this is not the case for non-fictional names such as 'Joe Biden'. Let me elaborate on this point.

First, an author can make up a story by constructing anaphoric chains of fictional names in the way suggested above, even if those names lack bearers. Second, if a work of fiction has successfully been published, certain norms of fiction are thereby established, and those norms are such that, if one engages with a fictional story, one is thereby prescribed to imagine as the story says; in other words, one is subject to the following norm: 'Imagine that p if, according to the story, p.'[10] Third, we can understand such norms as providing the correctness conditions for the use of fictional names. For example, insofar as we engage with a Holmes story such as *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, it is correct to imagine that Sherlock Holmes is a detective, whereas it is not correct to imagine that he is a ballet dancer. Note that the Holmes story does not say, nor imply, that Sherlock Holmes is a ballet dancer. Along these lines, we can argue that the correctness conditions for the use of a fictional name depend on a work of fiction in which it occurs. And since an author can make up a story by constructing anaphoric chains of fictional names, even if those names lack bearers, the meaningfulness of a fictional name does not depend on the condition that it has a bearer. By contrast, non-fictional names like 'Joe Biden' have bearers, and the correctness conditions for the use of a non-fictional name does not depend on any work of fiction. For example, we can say that Joe Biden is the 46th president of the United States. Clearly, this correct use of the name does not depend on any work of fiction.

An important related point is that, as mentioned in section 2, a fictional name can be used *fictionally*, that is, in internal discourse, and it can also be used *metafictionally*, that is, in external discourse. For example, 'Sherlock Holmes' can be used in a fictional statement such as 'Sherlock Holmes is a detective', and it can also be used in a metafictional statement such as 'Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character'. At this point, it is important to note that the reason why fictional names like 'Sherlock Holmes' can be correctly used not only in internal discourse, but also in external discourse is that authors such as Conan Doyle have successfully introduced the relevant fictional names into our language by having written fictional stories

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[10]   Note that at least under normal circumstances a fictional name like 'Sherlock Holmes' becomes a part of a public language only after a work of fiction containing the name has been published. In other words, before a work of fiction is published, there is no public meaning for fictional names which are introduced in the fiction.

containing them. But again, this is not the case for non-fictional names. For example, we can correctly say that Joe Biden is president. But this statement is neither fictional nor metafictional. This is because its correctness has nothing to do with any work of fiction.

The differences between fictional and non-fictional names in their language norms are discussed in more detail below.

4.1. Language-entry norms

As mentioned before, the meaningfulness of a fictional name does not depend on the condition that it has a bearer. As a consequence, fictional and non-fictional names are bound to be different with regard to language-entry norms, especially when fictional names are used metafictionally. Let me explain.

A fictional name like 'Sherlock Holmes' is introduced by a work of fiction. Thus, unlike the case of a non-fictional name, the original anaphoric chain of tokens of such a fictional name is constructed by an author (or authors), even if it lacks a bearer. Once such an anaphoric chain of tokens of the name is thus constructed, an anaphoric relation holds among those tokens, and it is by virtue of the anaphoric relation that those tokens of the fictional name are all about the same fictional character. Therefore, we may say that a fictional character is constructed (partly) by virtue of an anaphoric chain of tokens of a fictional name constructed by an author. And the meaning of a fictional name like 'Sherlock Holmes' is constituted by the relevant language norms which determine its correct use. And it is due to such correctness conditions that 'Sherlock Holmes' can be meaningfully used, despite the fact that it lacks a bearer. For this reason, a fictional name like 'Sherlock Holmes' has no language-entry norm that allows us to say 'Here is Sherlock Holmes' in the presence of the bearer of the name. And the fact that a fictional name lacks such a language-entry norm is no defect in its meaning at all. This is one important difference between fictional and non-fictional names in language-entry norms.[11]

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[11] Here I do not mean to deny that sentences like 'Here is Sherlock Holmes' might be used in response to some non-linguistic circumstances, when this fictional name is used fictionally. For example, it is possible that an actor A_1 who is playing the

There is also a related difference between fictional and non-fictional names. As mentioned in the previous section, the meaning of a non-fictional name is constituted in part by its language-entry norms, which prescribe allowable linguistic moves in response to non-linguistic circumstances. For example, in the presence of Jones, one is allowed to say 'Here is Jones'. Note that the name 'Jones' ought to be applied only to Jones. And this language norm requires settling non-linguistic circumstances in which this name is correctly used. But there is no such requirement for the use of a fictional name. For fictional names lack bearers.

A cautionary remark might be necessary. Here I am not denying that one can write a fictional story containing non-fictional names. For example, many non-fictional names including 'Napoleon Bonaparte' appear in Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, because this historical fiction chronicles the history of the French invasion of Russia and the impact of the Napoleon era on Tsarist Russia. In addition, our understanding of such a historical novel relies partly on our knowledge related to the historical background of such a novel. The question then is how we should understand the meaning of a non-fictional name used in a work of fiction. Let us focus on the use of 'Napoleon' in *War and Peace*. When we read such a historical novel, in the absence of contrary indications, we are supposed to understand non-fictional names like 'Napoleon' in an ordinary way. For example, in the absence of contrary indications, 'Napoleon' is used as the name of a real person, who was one of the greatest military commanders in history, Emperor of France, and one who invaded Russia.

But it should be noted that a historical fiction is a fiction, not a history book. Thus, a fiction author is not prevented from writing a fictional story which is not true of a historical figure such as Napoleon. As has been emphasized, insofar as we engage with a fictional story, we are prescribed to imagine as the story says. Non-fictional names are not exceptions. As a consequence, the Napoleon character in *War and Peace* does not have to be

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role of Dr. Watson in a Sherlock Holmes movie utters a sentence 'Here is Sherlock Holmes' in the presence of another actor A_2 who is playing the role of Sherlock Holmes. But we should not forget that A_1's statement should be understood from the perspective of the fiction. Thus, in such a case, we are prescribed to imagine that Watson says 'Here is Sherlock Holmes' in the presence of Sherlock Holmes.

the same as the real-life character of Napoleon. Therefore, although 'Napoleon' is the name of a real person, when it is used in the fiction, its use is governed by the following norm: 'Imagine that p if, according to the story, p.' As a consequence, the name 'Napoleon' is governed by different language norms, depending on whether it is used in a fictional context or in a non-fictional context. This means that whether it is used in a fictional context or in a non-fictional context makes a difference to its meaning. In this regard, it might be worth considering a historical movie in which an actor, say A_1, utters the sentence 'That's Napoleon', pointing to another actor, say A_2, who is playing the role of Napoleon. In this case, we may say that the name 'Napoleon' is correctly applied to A_2. This is because A_1 uses the name 'Napoleon' in a fictional context, and also because we as movie watchers are prescribed to imagine that A_2 is Napoleon. To put the point another way, the reason why the name 'Napoleon' is correctly applied to A_2 in this case is that its use is governed by the norms of fiction. Another thing to note is that the Napoleon character in a fiction can be very different from the real-life character of Napoleon if many things the fiction says about Napoleon are not true of the real Napoleon.

4-2. Language-language norms

Let us now turn to language-language norms. Compare the following two modal claims:

(5)   Joe Biden might not have been president.
(6)   Joe Biden might not have been a person.

There is an important sense in which we can make such a *de re* modal claim as (5), but we can hardly make such a *de re* modal claim as (6). Let me explain. The non-fictional name 'Joe Biden' is currently used as the name of a real person in our language, presumably by virtue of the fact that his parents gave the name to him. Thus, with regard to such a non-fictional name, we can, in principle, do the following: By pointing to a certain real person having a specific origin, and saying 'This one is Joe Biden', we can fix that person as the bearer of this name, and then start describing various hypothetical scenarios, continuing to use 'Joe Biden' as the name of the same person. This is why we can easily think about the possibility that Joe

Biden is not president, while continuing to use 'Joe Biden' as the name of the same person. This is also why we can say that 'Joe Biden is president' is contingently true, or equivalently that being president is an accidental property of Joe Biden. But insofar as we are using 'Joe Biden' as the name of the same individual, we can hardly describe a hypothetical scenario in which Joe Biden is not a person. Note that if someone uses 'Joe Biden' as a name of something other than a person, we can hardly interpret him as talking about the same individual whom we are talking about by using the name 'Joe Biden'. For this reason, we can say that there is no possible world in which Joe Biden is not a person, or equivalently that being a person is an essential property of Joe Biden.

We can also explain the above difference between (5) and (6) by virtue of the difference between inferences based on matters of fact and inferences based on language norms. Compare the following two inferences:

(5')   'x is Joe Biden' → 'x is president'.
(6')   'x is Joe Biden' → 'x is a person'.

Given the fact that we currently use 'Joe Biden' as the name of a certain person, we ought to use the name in accordance with (6'). This is the case even when we consider various hypothetical scenarios about Joe Biden. Recall that there is no possible world in which Joe Biden is not a person. And this is the reason why we can hardly make such a *de re* modal claim as (6). Along these lines, we can argue that (6') is a meaning-constitutive inference. By contrast, we can easily describe a possible scenario in which Joe Biden is not president. In this connection, I agree with Sellars (1948) that the meaning of an expression is constituted only by *counterfactually robust inferences*. If this is correct, (5') is not meaning-constitutive.[12]

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[12]   There are two approaches to inferentialist semantics. On Sellars's inegalitarian view, the meaning of an expression is constituted only by counterfactually robust inferences. By contrast, on Brandom's egalitarian view, all inferences including ones based on ancillary information are meaning-constitutive (see Brandom 1994, 634; 2010, 168). It is beyond the scope of this paper to settle whose view is correct. Thus, let me just mention two important reasons why I prefer Sellars's view. First, on this view, there is a principled distinction between inferences directly relevant to meaning and inferences based on ancillary information, and hence we can preserve our natural

This is not analogous to fictional names. Compare the following two statements:

(5'')   Joe Biden is president.
(1)   Sherlock Holmes is a detective.

As previously pointed out, we can correctly say (5''), but it is neither fictional nor metafictional, because its correctness has nothing to do with any work of fiction. In addition, since Joe Biden is a real individual whom we can locate in our physical world, we can fix that individual as the bearer of the name 'Joe Biden', and then start describing various hypothetical scenarios, continuing to use it as the name of the same individual. Therefore, (5'') is contingently true, and so (5') is not meaning-constitutive. By contrast, (1) is a fictional statement. And there are good reasons to think that the following is meaning-constitutive.

(1'')   'x is Sherlock Holmes' → 'x is a detective'.

First, an author can construct a fictional character in such a way that the nature of the fictional character is completely determined by the author.

Second, an author can also construct a fictional character in such a way that the distinction between necessity, possibility, and impossibility is ignored. For example, as in *The Metamorphosis* written by Franz Kafka, if an author wants, he can write a story in which a human being gets transformed into a non-human creature. This means that any property which an author has ascribed to a fictional character is partly constitutive of the fictional character. In this regard, it is worth recalling this: If a work of fiction has successfully been published, certain norms of fiction are thereby

intuition that the validity of such inferences as that 'Lassie is a dog' → 'Lassie is an animal' has a direct bearing on the meaning of an expression involved in such inferences, whereas this is not so with such inferences as that 'Lassie is a pet dog → 'Lassie is adorable'. Second, we can provide a good explanation as to why we don't usually feel much pressure for meaning instability. For example, we learn the meaning of 'dog' by learning to use it in accordance with the relevant public language norms such as that 'x is a dog' → 'x is an animal'. And we can share the meaning of 'dog' because we are bound by those same norms. Note that this intersubjective role of language norms is secured by the high stability of counterfactually robust inferences, not by ancillary information which can differ from person to person.

established, and those norms are such that, if one engages with a fictional story, one is thereby prescribed to imagine as the story says.

Third, strictly speaking, there is no cross-work identity for fictional characters. Let me explain. It seems that a fictional character appearing in a certain story can reappear in other stories. For example, Sherlock Holmes appearing in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* apparently reappears in other stories such as *A Samba for Sherlock* written by Brazilian author Jô Soares. There are many similarities between the Holmes character in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and the Holmes character in *A Samba for Sherlock*. For example, these two characters share many properties such as *having the same name*, *being a detective*, and *having Dr. Watson as a friend*. But there are also a number of dissimilarities. For example, unlike the former case, we are prescribed to imagine that Soares's Holmes is fumbling and nearsighted, and so he fails to solve the crimes he has undertaken to investigate.

The question then is whether or not these two are the same fictional character. On my view, these two are, strictly speaking, different fictional characters, because some norms of fiction to which we are subject in each of these cases are different. For example, as noted, we are prescribed to imagine that Soares's Holmes is fumbling and nearsighted. It is also important to observe that, for any predicate Conan Doyle ascribed to Sherlock Holmes in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, a new author can write a new fictional story in such a way that the predicate is not ascribed to a fictional character with the same name. This shows that there are no essential properties that make two characters in different stories one and the same character. Along these lines, we may argue that, strictly speaking, there is no cross-work identity for fictional characters.

If so, what kind of relation holds between the Holmes character in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and the Holmes character in *A Samba for Sherlock*? According to Sellars (1974), our concept (or meaning) can undergo a change. For example, the concept of mass changed during the transition from Newtonian mechanics to relativistic mechanics. In this case, the Einsteinian concept of mass is not simply other than the Newtonian concept of mass; for Newtonian mass and Einsteinian mass are so functionally similar that they can be regarded as varieties of mass. Along these lines, Sellars argues that these two concepts are closely related counterpart concepts.

And it is due to this counterpart concept relation that we may say that the concept of mass underwent a change from Newtonian mass to Einsteinian mass, rather than saying that an old concept was simply replaced by a wholly different concept. On my view, this Sellarsian view of counterpart concepts could be extended in an analogous manner to cases where the name of a fictional character reappears in a different work of fiction. Then we can say that the Holmes character in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* bears a kind of counterpart relation to the Holmes character in *A Samba for Sherlock*, although, strictly speaking, there is no cross-work identity between these two. And essentially the same point applies to fictional characters belonging to a group of stories written by the same author. Note again that, for any predicate ascribed to a fictional character by an author in a novel, the same author can in principle write a new fictional story in such a way that the predicate is not ascribed to a fictional character with the same name. Here I do not mean to deny that the audience could regard fictional characters with the same name which appear in a series of works written by the same author as the same fictional character in a loose sense.[13] But again, it needs to be emphasized that there are no essential properties that make two characters in different stories one and the same character in a strict sense.

If the above considerations are correct, one important difference between fictional and non-fictional names in language-language norms can be

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[13]   On my account, strictly speaking, there is no cross-work identity for fictional characters. In connection with this claim, an anonymous reviewer made the following suggestion: "The choice of taking a novel as the unit that determines a certain fictional character seems arbitrary: why not chapter/ paragraph/ sentence? I would suggest just taking 'story/narrative' as a primitive notion and allowing that a narrative can be spread out over several books. *Lord of the Rings* for instance consists of a couple of books but it is one narrative (and this entire narrative determines identity conditions for fictional characters)." This suggestion can be accommodated in my account. On my account, if a work of fiction has successfully been published, certain norms of fiction are thereby established, and those norms are such that, if one engages with a fictional story, one is thereby prescribed to imagine as the story says; in other words, one is subject to the following norm: 'Imagine that p if, according to the story, p.' This view is compatible with the claim that the story/narrative can be spread out over several books.

illustrated by the fact that (5') is not meaning-constitutive, whereas (1'') is meaning-constitutive. And this view provides a good explanation as to why it is difficult to make a *de re* modal claim about a fictional character such as 'Sherlock Holmes might not have been a detective'. First, with regard to a fictional name such as 'Sherlock Holmes', we cannot do the following: By pointing to a certain fictional character around us, and saying 'This one is Sherlock Holmes', we first fix that fictional character as the bearer of this name, and then start describing various hypothetical scenarios, continuing to use 'Sherlock Holmes' as the name of the same fictional character. This is because there is no real object that we can fix as the bearer of this name at the very beginning. Second, the above kind of modal claim presupposes that a fictional character could lose some of its properties without losing its identity. But fictional characters are not real agents who are capable of making free choices, and the nature of a fictional character is completely determined by the author (or authors). More importantly, our reality does not contain fictional characters as real objects. In this regard, it should be recalled that fictional names such as 'Sherlock Holmes' lack bearers.

There is an additional difference between fictional and non-fictional names in language-language norms. One can use 'Sherlock Holmes' in a met-afictional context. In such a case it should be used (or understood) partly in accordance with the following language-language norm: 'x is Sherlock Holmes' → 'x is a fictional character'.

Here it might be worth considering one possible objection. As pointed out before, on my inferentialist account, we can make *de re* modal claim about real individuals, but we cannot make *de re* modal claim about fictional characters. But this view seems to conflict with Friend's claim about *counter-fictional imagining* (see Friend 2011). For example, according to Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, Gregor Samsa wakes up one morning to find himself transformed into a beetle-like creature. But on Friend's view, we can imagine *counter-fictionally* that Gregor Samsa was transformed into a cockroach-like creature instead of a beetle-like creature. Let me address this problem. Consider the following modal claim:

(7)   Gregor Samsa might have been transformed into a cockroach-like creature instead of a beetle-like creature.

Admittedly, we can imagine a fictional situation such that Gregor Samsa was transformed into a cockroach-like creature. But imagining something differs from making a modal claim. What should be noted in this regard is that imagining is independent of truth and belief. For we can imagine not only what is false but also what is metaphysically (or physically) impossible. To put the point another way, one can imagine anything as one pleases, without committing oneself to holding what is imagined. For example, one can imagine that one goes faster than the speed of light, that one goes back to the past, or that one is transformed into a therianthrope. In addition, to say that one can write a fictional story in which a person is transformed into a non-human is tantamount to saying that one can imagine such a scenario. And as Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* illustrates, someone can certainly write such a fictional story. One more thing worth mentioning in this connection is that one's imagination does not have to be strict or complete. For these reasons, when one imagines a fictional situation which can be described partly by using the name of an object, the constraint of its identity conditions can be loosened. This is why one can imagine a fictional situation such that Joe Biden is transformed into a non-human, even if being a person is an essential property of Joe Biden.

Keeping the above point in mind, consider the claim that Gregor Samsa might have been transformed into a cockroach-like creature. And let us call the cockroach-like creature Gregor Samsa*. Then, a question arises regarding whether Gregor Samsa* is really the same fictional character as Gregor Samsa we know from Kafka's story. On my view, the answer is 'No'. Let me explain.

Insofar as we are engaging with Kafka's story, we are not prescribed to imagine that Gregor Samsa was transformed into a cockroach-like creature. In addition, from the perspective outside the fictional story, the only solid fact we have is that Kafka wrote a certain story of Gregor Samsa. Therefore, what we can say here is just a possibility that Kafka might have written a somewhat different story using the name 'Gregor Samsa'. But if such were the case, strictly speaking, we would have a different story, and so a different fictional character. Of course, I do not mean to deny that one can imagine contrary to what Kafka's story of Gregor Samsa says. But this does not show that (7) is a true modal claim about the Gregor Samsa character.

Recall that what one can imagine is not constrained by the conditions for the identity of an object. The question then is: How can we make sense of the alleged counter-fictional situation that Gregor Samsa was transformed into a cockroach-like creature?

The aforementioned view of counterpart concepts can help us on this matter as well. As pointed out before, there are no essential properties that make two characters in different stories one and the same character in a strict sense. Thus, we can say, for example, that the Holmes character in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* bears a kind of counterpart relation to the Holmes character in *A Samba for Sherlock*. And this view could be applied to alleged counter-fictional imagining. As mentioned before, our concept can undergo a change. Thus, we can think about the possibility that our current concept of Gregor Samsa would undergo a change. For example, if we imagined that Gregor Samsa was transformed into a cockroach-like creature, our present concept of Gregor Samsa would undergo a change. Along these lines, we may argue that our imagination about Gregor Samsa is based on our current concept of Gregor Samsa, but nonetheless the former is not constrained by the latter. Recall again that what one can imagine is not constrained by the conditions for the identity of an object. We may also argue that our present concept of Gregor Samsa bears a counterpart relation with the concept of Gregor Samsa*, and so when we imagine that Gregor Samsa was transformed into a cockroach-like creature, what we are really imagining is a fictional situation which can be described partly by using a counterpart concept of Gregor Samsa. Hence, on my view, to say that one can imagine counter-fictionally that Gregor Samsa was transformed into a cockroach-like creature is tantamount to saying that one can imagine a very similar fictional situation which can be described partly by using a counterpart concept of Gregor Samsa.[14]

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[14]   At this point, it is worth considering an objection raised by an anonymous reviewer. On my account, there is no cross-work identity for fictional characters, and an anaphoric relation is a commitment-preserving link (at least insofar as an anaphor and its antecedent are used in the same context). If so, how can this account square with the fact that anaphoric pronouns can be used across different works of fiction. For example, consider the following sentences:

4.3. Language-exit norms

Finally, fictional and non-fictional names also have some important differences in language-exit norms, which prescribe non-linguistic moves in response to linguistic episodes.

(i) In Doyle's stories, Holmes is a successful detective, but in *A Samba for Sherlock*, he is a failure.

(ii) According to the Harry Potter books, Harry is a straight guy, but in a certain fan-fiction, he is bisexual.

In the first sentence, the name 'Holmes' and the pronoun 'he' are anaphorically related. In the second sentence, the name 'Harry' and the pronoun 'he' are also anaphorically related. But we should notice that sometimes a pronoun can be used for a usage where there is an imprecise match between a pronoun and its antecedent. To illustrate, consider the following two sentences:

(iii) Jane wears her hat almost every day, but Susan wears it only on special event days.

(iv) According to Newtonian mechanics, the mass of an object is constant, but according to Einstein's theory of relativity it is interconvertible with energy.

The pronoun 'it' contained in (iii) is used instead of its antecedent 'her hat' to avoid unnecessary repetition. But it and its antecedent are not co-referential. A similar point can be made about (iv). The pronoun 'it' here is also used to avoid unnecessary repetition. But the meaning of 'mass' is different between Newtonian mechanics and Einstein's theory of relativity. As these examples illustrate, when an anaphor and its antecedent are used across different contexts, it is not required that they mean the same thing.

With the above point in mind, consider sentences (i) and (ii) again. On my account, we can regard the first conjunct of (i) as reporting a fact about what Doyle's stories say, and the second conjunct of (i) as reporting a fact about what Soares's novel entitled 'A Samba for Sherlock' says. In a similar vein, we can regard the first conjunct of (ii) as reporting a fact about what Harry Potter books say, and the second conjunct of (ii) as reporting a fact about what a certain fan-fiction related to the Harry Potter books says. In addition, the pronoun 'he' both in (i) and (ii) can be best interpreted as being used as a pronoun of laziness. Therefore, cases of this kind do not pose a serious problem for my account. For cases of this kind are compatible with my claim that, strictly speaking, there is no cross-work identity for fictional characters. What is also noteworthy in this connection is that on my account, Harry Potter in the Harry Potter books bears a kind of counterpart relation to Harry Potter in the fan-fiction.

Let us begin by considering the case in which fictional names are used in internal discourse. As has been emphasized, when we engage with a fictional story, we are prescribed to imagine as the story says. As a consequence, fictional names are not governed by the typical kind of language-exit norms determining the correct use of non-fictional names. For example, if you engage with a Holmes story such as *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, you are prescribed to imagine that Sherlock Holmes is a detective. But you are not prescribed to make any non-linguistic move in response to such a fictional sentence. Therefore, fictional statements do not play the kind of conduct-guiding role that non-fictional statements typically have.[15]

And when fictional names are used in external discourse, these names and non-fictional names are bound to have some important differences in language-exit norms, because fictional names lack bearers. There are two kinds of cases in which a non-linguistic move is prescribed in response to a linguistic episode. In the first kind of case, a speaker's statement can prescribe a hearer to make a non-linguistic move. For example, in the case of the name of a real person, a speaker can ask the bearer of the name to do something (e.g., closing a door). In the second kind of case, a speaker's intention statement can prescribe the speaker herself to make a non-linguistic move. For example, a person can ask a question to another person named 'Smith' after she says, 'I'll ask a question to Smith'. But fictional characters are not real agents who can do something in response to a speaker's request, and so there are no language-exit norms for a fictional name by which a fictional character is prescribed to make a non-linguistic move. In addition, since fictional names like 'Sherlock Holmes' lack bearers, we are not allowed to make intention statements of the following sort: 'I will meet Sherlock Holmes', and 'I will hire Sherlock Holmes to solve this case.'

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[15]   Here I do not deny that there might be non-linguistic moves based on fictional discourse. For example, it is possible that an actor A_1 in a Sherlock Holmes movie utters a sentence 'I will meet Sherlock Holmes', and then there follows a scene in which A_1 meets another actor A_2 who is playing the role of Sherlock Holmes. But we should not forget that A_1's statement should be understood from the perspective of the fiction. And if the script of the movie does not include a scene in which A_1 meets A_2, A_1's fictional statement that he will meet Sherlock Holmes does not make him act so as to meet A_2.

As argued before, a fictional name is governed by different language norms, depending on whether it is used in internal discourse or in external discourse. In this regard, it is noteworthy that one can be subject to different norms in different contexts. For example, it is possible that some veterans in a certain country are subject to civilian law in peacetime, whereas they are subject to military law in wartime. In such a case, those veterans should understand that they must follow different laws, depending on whether they are in a war situation or not. In a similar vein, there is nothing strange about the fact that when a fictional name 'Sherlock Holmes' is used in internal discourse, we are prescribed to imagine that Sherlock Holmes is a detective, whereas when this fictional name is used in external discourse, we can say that Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character. And one who fully understands the meaning of a fictional name should know how to use the name not only in internal discourse but also in external discourse. Therefore, it is due to the very nature of a fictional name that it is governed by different language norms, depending on whether it is used in internal discourse, or in external discourse.[16]

5. Merits of my inferentialist account

So far, I have defended an inferentialist account of fictional names on the basis of Sellars-Brandom's inferentialist semantics and a Brandomian anaphoric theory of reference. In this final section, let me briefly explain why my account satisfies the four desiderata discussed in section 2.

First, on my inferentialist account, fictional names are genuine names whose meanings are constituted by the relevant language norms which determine their correct use. As a consequence, this account does not face

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[16] What is noteworthy in this regard is that fictional names are not ambiguous at least in the sense that terms like 'bank' are ambiguous. If someone says 'Jones owns a bank', what is said by her could mean that Jones owns a financial institution or that Jones owns the land alongside a body of water. So disambiguation is needed to understand what she said. But this is not the case for fictional names. Depending on whether a fictional name is used in internal discourse, or in external discourse, we can understand what it means, with no need for disambiguation.

problems with the descriptivist view of names. For example, this account can explain why one can successfully use a fictional name, even if one knows very little about the descriptions associated with the name. On my inferentialist account, one may (or ought to) use a fictional name in accordance with the relevant language norms. And we can engage in the social division of linguistic labor with regard to those language norms. Therefore, we can use a fictional name by deferring to authorities on the norms governing the use of the name. This is why one can successfully use fictional names, even if one knows very little about the descriptions associated with the name.

Second, fictional names are also meaningful. This is again because the meaning of a fictional name is constituted by the relevant language norms which determine its correct use. In this regard, it is noteworthy that the crucial difference between fictional and non-fictional names is not that, unlike the latter, the former are not meaningful, but rather that at least some of their language norms are different. And this should be the case because, whether or not a name has a bearer affects its relevant language norms, and fictional names such as 'Sherlock Holmes' lack bearers.

Third, my account also explains the meaning of fictional names without attributing bearers to these names. The reason is clear. On my account, the meaningfulness of a fictional name does not depend on the condition that it has a bearer. As has been emphasized, the meaning of a fictional name is constituted by the relevant language norms which determine its correct use. And even though a fictional name lacks a bearer, the anaphoric theory of reference discussed in section 3 allows us to genuinely use (or understand) the name in accordance with the relevant language norms. This is because the sameness of reference can be achieved by an anaphoric relation, and reference here should be understood in terms of an anaphoric word-word relation, instead of a substantial referential relation between a linguistic expression and an extra-linguistic entity. Therefore, we can retain the natural opinion that fictional names are indeed meaningful, even if they lack bearers.[17]

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[17]   Brandom (1994, especially 440-449) defends the so-called 'relaxed account of existence'. On this account, to say that o exists is to say that there is some address in some structured space of addresses to which o may be assigned. What then is a structured space of addresses? According to Brandom, there are some privileged

Fourth, and finally, my account provides a uniform semantic account of fictional names across different types of statements in which fictional names are involved. Consider the following sentences again:

(1)   Sherlock Holmes is a detective.

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sets of expressions playing the role of what he calls 'canonical designators'; and a disjoint class of canonical designators defines a distinct structured space of addresses at which objects may be located. On the basis of this notion of canonical designators, he explains what it is to be committed to the existence of a kind of object: Roughly, to be committed to the existence of a kind of object is to treat a certain class of designators as canonical designators. Furthermore, on his view, there are at least three distinguished classes of canonical designators, and so at least three species of existence. On this view, Sherlock Holmes has fictional existence because 'Sherlock Holmes' is a fictional canonical designator and so Sherlock Holmes has an address in a certain fictive space. Along these lines, Brandom argues that physical existence, arithmetic existence, and fictional existence are species of existence. This relaxed account of existence has some merits and demerits. But I don't have enough space to discuss them here. Thus, let me confine myself to pointing out the most important reason why I do not accept this account.

Realists about fictional characters believe that our reality contains fictional characters such as Sherlock Holmes. In other words, they are ontologically committed to such fictional objects. By contrast, anti-realists deny that our reality contains such fictional objects. Considering this important disagreement about ontological commitment, it is contentious whether our reality does contain fictional characters such as Sherlock Holmes. For this reason, it would be misleading to say that fictional characters such as Sherlock Holmes exist as objects in some structured space of addresses. Here I do not deny that Brandom uses the expression 'existence' in a relaxed manner. Nevertheless, his insistence that physical existence, arithmetic existence, and fictional existence are species of existence could easily mislead us into neglecting the aforementioned important ontological disagreement about fictional characters. Hence, at least from an anti-realist point of view, we had better bring out the important difference between merely fictional characters and ontologically real objects such as physical objects more clearly, rather than covering up them by using the term 'existence' in the relaxed manner that Brandom suggests. Besides, on my view, fictional names such as 'Sherlock Holmes' lack bearers. If this is correct, it would be very misleading to say that fictional characters such as Sherlock Holmes exist as objects in some structured space of addresses.

(2)   According to *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Sherlock Holmes is a detective.

(3)   Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character created by Conan Doyle.

On my account, when a fictional name is used in internal discourse, it is governed by the following norm: 'Imagine that p if, according to the story, p.' As a consequence, we are prescribed to imagine that Sherlock Holmes is a detective. In this sense, we can take (1) to be true as a fictional statement. In addition, we can understand (1) in accordance with the relevant language norms. For example, we can understand it partly in accordance with the following language-language norm: 'Sherlock Holmes is a detective' $\rightarrow$ 'he collects information to solve crimes'. Therefore, we can explain the meaning of the fictional name 'Sherlock Holmes' here in accordance with the inferentialist semantics.[18]

Let us consider (3) before (2). It is an empirical question whether there is such a fictional character as Sherlock Holmes. This is because such a question depends on whether a relevant work of fiction has actually been written. And we know that Arthur Conan Doyle wrote some fictional stories in

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[18]   On the prefix view such as Brock's prefix fictionalism (2002), we cannot take such a fictional statement as 'Sherlock Holmes is a detective' as its face value, ascribing it the same subject-predicate form that a parallel description about a real-life character has; instead, we should always regard it as an abbreviation for a longer sentence beginning with a story operator such as 'according to *The Hound of the Baskervilles*'. Notice that the embedded sentence is part of a prefixed sentence, and so the longer sentence would not be meaningful unless the embedded sentence is meaningful. Therefore, unless the prefix strategy provides a plausible account of fictional names within the scope of a story operator, this strategy would only defer the task of providing a plausible semantic account of fictional names. By contrast, my inferentialist account allows us to take such a fictional sentence as 'Sherlock Holmes is a detective' as a simple subject-predicate sentence, in a similar way as we can take such a non-fictional sentence as 'Joe Biden is president' as a simple subject-predicate sentence. Instead of taking 'Sherlock Holmes is a detective' as an abbreviation for a longer sentence beginning with a story operator, my account distinguishes between two discourses in which the fictional name is used. If it is used in internal discourse, we can ascribe the predicate 'is a detective' to Sherlock Holmes, whereas if it is used in external discourse, we can ascribe the predicate 'is a fictional character' to Sherlock Holmes.

which the Holmes character is portrayed. Therefore, we can say that there is such a fictional character as Sherlock Holmes. In addition, as pointed out in the previous section, when one uses 'Sherlock Holmes' in external discourse, one must use it partly in accordance with the following language-language norm: 'x is Sherlock Holmes' → 'x is a fictional character'. For these reasons, (3) is a metafictional statement which we can endorse as true.

Finally, my inferentialist account allows us to understand (2) without difficulty. As mentioned in section 2, (2) is a parafictional statement. On my view, however, the alleged parafictional statements are a species of metafictional statements. Recall that (2) is used in external discourse. And in external discourse, we can say that (2) is true on the grounds that Conan Doyle wrote a fictional story entitled 'The Hound of the Baskervilles' in which Sherlock Holmes is a detective. In this regard, it is worth recalling that it is an empirical question whether a certain author wrote a novel in which a certain predicate is ascribed to a certain fictional character. For this reason, we may regard (2) as reporting a fact about a certain work of fiction and what it says.

In addition, my account has no difficulty in explaining how the properties which parafictional statements ascribe to the putative referent of a fictional name are the kind of properties that fictional statements ascribe. For example, they are properties like *being a detective* or *playing the violin*, that is, properties suitable for flesh and blood individuals, not for abstract entities. On my inferentialist account, we can understand the embedded sentence 'Sherlock Holmes is a detective' of (2) in accordance with the relevant language norms; and when this sentence is used within a story operator, we can understand 'Sherlock Holmes' partly in accordance with the following language-language norms: 'x is Sherlock Holmes' → 'x is a human being'; 'x is Sherlock Holmes' → 'x can die'.

Furthermore, the recent debate on anaphoric dependencies across mixed discourse does not pose a serious problem for my account.[19] For example, consider the following two statements:

(8)   Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character created by Conan Doyle. In Conan Doyle's stories, he is a detective.

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[19]   For a detailed discussion of this debate, see Semeijn & Zalta (2021, 171-75).

(9)   In *War and Peace*, Napoleon is a hero. But actually, he was noth-
        ing but a dictator.

(8) is mixed discourse in that Sherlock Holmes's being a fictional character
is said from the perspective outside fiction, and his being a detective is said
from the perspective within fiction. And (9) is also mixed discourse in that
Napoleon's being a hero is said from the perspective within fiction, and his
being a dictator is said from the perspective outside fiction.

The first thing to note is that the pronoun 'he' in (8) can be replaced
by its anaphoric antecedent 'Sherlock Holmes'. For the pronoun in this case
is used *in the lazy way* in order to avoid unnecessary repetition of the name.
The second thing to note is that as pointed out before, my account takes
the alleged parafictional statements to be a species of metafictional state-
ments. Note that the first and second statements in (8) are to be evaluated
from the perspective outside fiction. Accordingly, parafictional statements
can be mixed with metafictional statements. Therefore, on my account,
there is no difficulty in understanding mixed discourse such as (8).

(9) can be dealt with in a similar way. The first thing to note is that
a non-fictional name like 'Napoleon' can be used in a fiction. For this rea-
son, 'Napoleon' in the first statement of (9) and 'Napoleon' in the second
statement are used as the name of the same real person. But what should
be noted at this point is that the Napoleon character in a fiction can be
very different from the real-life character of Napoleon if many things the
fiction says about Napoleon are not true of the real Napoleon. To put the
point another way, the first statement is a metafictional statement about
the Napoleon character in *War and Peace*, and the second statement is
a non-fictional statement about Napoleon. Therefore, both the first and sec-
ond statements in (9) are to be evaluated from the perspective outside fic-
tion. What is worth recalling here is that the alleged parafictional state-
ments are a species of metafictional statements. Therefore, there is no dif-
ficulty in understanding (9).

One more thing to note about mixed discourse is that, as Semeijn and
Zalta (2021) argue, the literature on mixed discourse only establishes a need
for a uniform analysis across parafictional and metafictional statements.
This fact fits very well with my account. On my account, as has been em-
phasized, parafictional statements are a species of metafictional statements.

Thus, there is no wonder that parafictional statements can be mixed with metafictional statements. And fictional statements can hardly be mixed with metafictional or parafictional statements. This is because we can hardly take both the perspective within fiction and the perspective outside fiction simultaneously.

To conclude, my inferentialist account satisfies the aforementioned four desiderata for a sematic account of fictional name. Hence, I argue that my account provides a viable and attractive account of the meaning of fictional names.[20]

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